

NFIB Ad Hoc Task Force on the Linguistic Problem

BACKGROUND:

1. On 12 August 1975, Lt. General Samuel V. Wilson, then Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence Community, wrote to the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Intelligence ASD (I), the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, and the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, advising them that "In reviewing the FY 1977-1981 National Foreign Intelligence Program (NFIP), the DCI identified the availability of qualified linguists as a possible major problem facing the Intelligence Community." General Wilson added that while most of the DCI's "concern centered on linguistic capability within the Consolidated Cryptological Program (CCP), it was readily recognized that a shortage and the quality of linguists applied to all Agencies/Departments." As a follow-up to the DCI's concern, each addressee was asked to provide the following data:

- "Linguist requirements by language.
- Identify language training and quality shortfalls and most critical languages.
- Normal assignment of linguists; i.e., tactical units, strategic collectors, HUMINT, SIGINT, translators, production, etc.
- Immediate, mid-term and long-range plans for training and application of linguistic talent (the military should identify peace-time utilization plans as well as contingency employment for linguists positions in direct support units).
- Identify any efforts in research and development directed toward improvements in language processing.
- Recommendations for improving the linguistic problem, such as: approaches to the academic world, improved career fields, training improvements, etc."

Replies were requested by 15 September 1975. The ASD(I) was to provide a consolidated input for DoD members of the Intelligence Community.

ATINTL 2. On 17 February 1976, [REDACTED] of the IC Staff sent a background
ATINTL paper to [REDACTED] subject "Linguists," as a result of the tabling
by Lieutenant General Tighe of the "linguists problem" at the 9 February
1976 USIB meeting. The discussion at that meeting centered round "the
need to identify linguistic requirements and see what is being done to
ATINTL satisfy these needs." [REDACTED] then summarized for [REDACTED] the replies

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provided by DoD, CIA, and State/INR to the IC staff's August 1975 request for information on the linguistic problem. Among his conclusions were:

- "Language requirements for all agencies/departments have been identified and efforts to meet these requirements are underway.
- The language career field for all departments/agencies requires revamping. Linguists like other technicians can advance only so far until they must move into management, or not progress up the grade level toward higher income brackets. The result of this job classification problem, and being moved out of the technical (purely linguistic) fields, results in a constant erosion of the higher skilled linguists. This problem has been recognized and is being worked, but it is a slow process.
- The curriculum at DLI (Defense Language Institute) and FSI (Foreign Service Institute) needs improvement. Again, this problem has been recognized and DoD, in particular, is working toward improvement."

3. On 30 April 1976, a USIB memorandum advised Members of the USIB that the DCI had approved the establishment of an ad hoc task force of Intelligence Community representatives chaired by [REDACTED] of the Intelligence Community Staff to:

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- "Review the recommendations contained in the survey conducted by the IC Staff (August 1975),
- Determine the feasibility of implementing those recommendations requiring cooperative community efforts, and
- Develop an implementation plan that would be recommended to the DCI for his approval and submission to the USIB for consideration."

Attached to the USIB memorandum was a memorandum from Admiral Murphy, "Background and Recommendations on the Linguistic Problem" which, inter alia, summarized in some detail the findings of the survey conducted by the IC Staff in August 1975.

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The ad hoc task force under [REDACTED] Chairmanship met several times during the summer and fall of 1976. Its fifth meeting on 10 December 1976 was devoted to "developing the formats and contents of a report to be prepared by the task force." No such report was prepared and, apparently, the task force was inactive until the fall of 1977.

4. In September of that year, Admiral Turner wrote to the Acting Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence Community directing the IC Staff "on a medium priority basis" to "look into the prospects of our supply of Russian linguists." This requirement was levied on the ad hoc task force. The task force addressed this problem and its findings were transmitted to the DCI by [REDACTED] Deputy to the DCI for Resource Management (D/DCI/RM), on 8 February 1978. Since the task force found that "linguist-associated problems generally impact all languages, not only Russian," [REDACTED] recommended that the DCI task "the NFIB ad hoc task force on the linguistic problem to develop a series of initiatives designed to improve the recruiting, retention and qualifications of linguistics." The DCI approved [REDACTED] recommendation and on 16 February 1978 notified the NFIB that he had directed the ad hoc task force, "under the leadership of my Deputy for Resource Management (to) design a national program to:

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- "a. expand and coordinate linguist recruitment activity;
- b. develop and maintain language training proficiency standards; and
- c. implement, as necessary, incentives programs designed to attract and retain qualified linguists in critical languages and skills."

The DCI emphasized that his objective was to "provide greater resources and flexibility to agency linguist development efforts" and that he did not envision any "supra-agency personnel management."

5. The ad hoc task force was reconstituted under the Chairmanship of [REDACTED] (who had been reassigned) and began its work in March 1978. In a memo sent to members of the ad hoc task force by [REDACTED] on 1 March, convening a meeting of the task force for the 13th of March, [REDACTED] outlined certain tasks to meet the DCI's objective. On 9 May, the D/DCI/RM requested Dr. Gerald P. Dineen, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence (C³I), to have his staff obtain from each of the military services, actions which they have undertaken to solve their linguists problems. The reply to [REDACTED] request was prepared by Mr. Craig L. Wilson, Staff Assistant for Intelligence and C³ Human Resources, and sent to [REDACTED] on 13 July, just prior to his resignation. A copy of Mr. Wilson's reply (without enclosures) is attached as Tab A.

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6. On 19 May 1978, [REDACTED] circulated to members of the ad hoc task force a draft of a memorandum from the D/DCI/RM to NFIB Principals on a "Procedure for Cooperative Interagency Recruiting of Civilian Linguists" (based on a plan developed by [REDACTED]). Members of the task force were asked to comment on this proposed memorandum. I have no record of any having done so with one exception. On 3 June 1978, Carl W. Clewlow, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy) advised C³I that such a referral system could be developed and automated without difficulty (Tab B).

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7. [REDACTED] has also proposed that the Intelligence Community, possibly by means of a letter from the DCI to specified Heads of Language Departments in various universities and colleges, apprise the academic community of "positions in the Foreign Affairs Intelligence Community Requiring Foreign Language Skills." A draft of a proposed form is enclosed (Tab C).

8. More than three years have passed since the IC Staff at the request of the DCI enlisted the cooperation of the Intelligence Community in investigating the linguists problem and making recommendations to the DCI for approval and implementation. During these three years a mass of data has been assembled; numerous meetings have been held; the problem has been discussed almost ad infinitum; a report has been prepared on the special subject of Russian linguists; individual agencies and departments have addressed, with some success, specific problems capable of solution with no Community assistance. With the exception, however, of the Report on Russian Linguists, no specific action (based on the recommendations of the task force) has been undertaken by the Intelligence Community. It is apparent that it is high time for the task force to conclude its work by forwarding through the D/DCI/RM to the DCI recommendations for specific action. Within the near future I propose that the task force assemble at the Community Headquarters Building (CHB) to transact the following business:

A. Approve the draft memorandum to be submitted to D/DCI/RM on a "Procedure for Cooperative Interagency Recruiting of Civilian Linguists."

B. Determine whether it is advisable and feasible to develop with C³I details for the location and automation of such a referral system within the Department of Defense.

C. Agree that in view of the efforts already being undertaken in the DoD as outlined by Mr. Wilson (Tab A), the task force, in its final report, advise the DCI of the progress made in the DoD but make no recommendations for specific action within the DoD or its individual components.

D. Investigate on a priority basis, pay and career incentive programs for implementation to retain qualified linguists in all sections of the Community.

E. Refine the suggestion of [REDACTED] to advise the academic community of vacancies in the intelligence community requiring foreign language skills. STATINTL

F. Consider which, if any, recommendations the Task Force should make concerning the development and maintenance of language training and proficiency standards.